

Vision 21 Implementation Committee
Minutes -- December 2, 2004
Approved January 6, 2005

Members present: Victoria Haase, Matt Hausmann, Sara Oaklander, Meg O'Brien, Jennifer Page, Paul Solomon.

Members absent: Tim Higgins (excused), Diane Stafford, Barry Winston.

Jennifer Page, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm

1. Administrative

Minutes from the November 4, 2004 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Agenda for tonight's meeting was distributed and reviewed.

2. Catching up

Paul Solomon brought us up to date on a project he has been pursuing since late spring: the Waverley Trail Project. The group working with Dr. Solomon seeks to establish signage and a trail from Waverley Square to Waverley Oaks, with the expectation of encouraging interest in the history of the area and increased vitality to the Square. Victoria commented that she has been thinking of creating historical signage throughout Town in anticipation of the Town's 150th anniversary, in 2009. This might dovetail nicely with the Waverley Trail Project. ("We will maintain...our historic buildings as witnesses to our past.")

3. Filling two open seats on the committee

Reminding members of the resignations of both Joe Greene and Bill Hofmann, Jennifer asked members to reflect on what kinds of qualifications we might seek in replacing them. We agreed that the business experience of both Joe and Bill and their long-time residence in the Town were invaluable assets to the committee; we hope that at least one "open" seat could be filled by someone with a similar background. Several names were suggested, that of Alex Corbett rising to top the list. Jennifer will call Alex to explore with him his interest. It was understood that the appointment is made by the Board of Selectmen, but we hope that our recommendation would carry weight.

General discussion about the "other" seat ensued. A variety of criteria was proposed as we thought about the skills/background that would be helpful to us on the Committee. Desirable qualifications mentioned included the following: Experience in/commitment to environmental issues, given our interest in establishing a follow-up initiative to the Fair; a deep knowledge of the Town and schools; prior experience in town affairs in a different town, lending a different perspective to our work; experiencing in taking real initiative to promote a project in Belmont (i.e. an activist).

Support for Jenny Fallon was reiterated; her leadership on the environmental issue was superb and she knows the Town and schools exceptionally well. Jenny is not prepared to make a commitment at this time, given her work on the Esco project and on the high school renovation project, and some immediate health issues. We agreed to give her more time to reflect on this opportunity.

4. Invitation from BAR to the Vision Committee to become a co-sponsor of the Martin Luther King Breakfast

Jennifer read an e-mail from Kathryn Bonfiglio, chairman of Belmont Against Racism, inviting the Vision Implementation Committee to become a co-sponsor of the Martin Luther King Breakfast. Several community groups already are co-sponsors. Kathryn's note suggested that as a co-sponsor the Committee's name would be on published materials; and we would be expected to (a) use our individual contacts to encourage wider participation; and (b) give some help to the event – assisting with set up or registration, for example, and perhaps sending a representative to the committee that selects the award recipient.

The group discussed the general question of the Vision Committee becoming a co-sponsor of various events and projects in town. Jennifer reminded the group that we invited several other groups in town to co-sponsor the Environmental Fair, and that was an important underpinning of the success of the Fair. (Our co-sponsors for that event were the School Department, Habitat, the Electric Light Department, and the Conservation Commission.)

The advantages of becoming a co-sponsor ourselves to the MLK breakfast include increased visibility for the work of our Committee; increased public acceptance of the Vision Statement; coalition-building to support major values expressed in the Vision. The main problem identified is how to decline such an invitation if we feel we should do so, once there is a precedent established for our co-sponsoring an event. We agreed that we need to decide on a case-by-case basis, but that we should begin to develop criteria for responding to such invitations, assuming that other invitations will come along from time to time.

Criteria proposed are these:

- The purpose (or value) of the event should be immediately and explicitly a part of the Vision Statement.
- The project or event should be seen as a unifying experience in the Town, -- that is, not one that is divisive or that would exclude part of the population.
- The mission of the organization or group proposing the project should not be perceived to have its "own agenda" which might not fit with that of the Vision.

There was general agreement to these criteria, knowing that they may need further refinement. For now, they seem workable. Within these parameters, it was felt that becoming a co-sponsor of the Martin Luther King Breakfast was an appropriate role for the Vision Implementation Committee and that we should accept the invitation. Several of us could be present to help at the event. Jennifer will contact Kathryn Bonfilio accordingly.

The breakfast will be held on Monday, January 17th at 9:00 a.m. in the High School cafeteria. Mark your new 2005 calendars now!

We adjourned at 7:40 p.m., so that members could go either to the holiday tree lighting in Belmont Center or to a presentation by MIT students regarding their Trapelo Road study, sponsored by the Citizens' Forum.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Page
Secretary Pro Tem

